



## Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

Online Version: <https://www.feedthefuture.gov/article/new-approaches-nutrition-bear-fruit-morogoro>

## New Approaches to Nutrition Bear Fruit in Morogoro



Africare

Hadija Ramiya pictured with her two children, Tunda (left) and Sam (right).

Hadija Ramiya is a young mother living in Towero, one of a number of small villages dotting the hills of Tanzania's Morogoro Region. Surveying Towero's lush, green environment boasting towering fruit trees and beautiful views, it might be surprising to learn that mothers like Ramiya wage a daily war against undernutrition, both for themselves and on behalf of their children. Approximately 44 percent of children in Morogoro under the age of five are stunted – an indication of chronic undernutrition that robs children of healthy physical and cognitive development and leaves them exposed to frequent illness.

Ramiya describes her first child, Sam, as sickly and vulnerable to a range of ailments since birth. Without access to a variety of foods or knowledge of proper nutrition, Ramiya relied on community wisdom to decide what to feed her son. When he was two months old, she fed him a diet of water and porridge. At six months, he started eating ugali, the traditional Tanzanian dish of cooked maize flour with sauce. By his first birthday, Sam was eating the same food his parents ate at every meal.

When a Feed the Future-supported nutrition program came to Towero in 2012, Ramiya quickly became involved in its behavior-change activities. With a special focus on social and behavior change communication, the program reaches mothers like Ramiya through peer support groups, where members can learn in a relaxed and familiar environment how to properly nourish themselves and their young children.

Since it started in 2011, this program has reached almost 2,000 villages in Tanzania and supported over 1.5 million women with various nutrition tools and information, such as gardening, micronutrient supplementation and health education.

Ramiya's home is now a testament to the program's success. She grows her own vegetables and keeps a small colony of rabbits, whose high protein content provides a much-needed source of nutrition for her family. Ramiya also sells the rabbits and uses the additional income to buy clothing and food items like fish and cooking oil to diversify her family's diet. Perhaps the most telling proof of the program's impact on Ramiya's family is in her bright-eyed three-year-old, Tunda.

Tunda, which means fruit in Kiswahili, is Ramiya's second child. Ramiya is using what she learned under the Feed the Future nutrition program to ensure her family eats a healthy diet, which means in part that Tunda was exclusively breastfed for the first six months after her birth. Once Tunda was old enough to start eating complementary foods, Ramiya followed the program's guidance to boost the nutrients in her porridge with a mixture of maize, rice, millet and groundnuts.

The whole family is now reaping the benefits of a diversified diet and an economically stable household. Ramiya's experience is a powerful demonstration of how knowledge can empower communities to make positive behavior changes and build

nutritional practices that are sure to bear fruit in places like Towero for years to come.

*The **Mwanzo Bora Nutrition Program (MBNP)** is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development through the Feed the Future initiative. MBNP works in three regions in Tanzania and three districts in Zanzibar, helping communities reduce childhood stunting and maternal anemia.*